

Floundering flatfish! A video communication case study

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In February 2015, three videos were produced in the context of the landing obligation or “discard ban” of the European Common Fisheries Policy. That policy, which will have an important economic impact on the fishery sector, does contain an exception clause: certain fish species may be discarded if scientific research can prove a high survival rate of that species after discarding. ILVO scientists have developed a non-invasive methodology that may be helpful in predicting the chance of flatfish to survive their discarding.

We showcased this research using video to create impact and visualize the concept: an introduction video targeting a more general audience (produced in both Dutch and English) and a methodology video targeting researchers and fishermen (English only). A detailed shotlist and voice over text was scripted and repeatedly revised among communicators and scientists. A dedicated day was spent to capture key footage with a trained cameraman and archives were scanned for additional recordings.

In total the three videos have been viewed over 2,100 times. Most of the viewers were located in Dutch-speaking areas (i.e., fisheries sector and fellow researchers) and the US and many other countries (e.g., scientific collaborators). Peaks in views were observed at different times for the English and Dutch versions of the introduction videos and for the methodology video. Fellow scientists reported having used the videos for training seagoing observers in the methodology used. Researchers judged the videos as a useful illustration of otherwise difficult-to-visualize scientific results (Uhlmann et al., 2016). Additionally, the videos served to foster acceptance of this method in the fisheries sector.

These video products were time-consuming to produce, in part due to staff inexperience. In total the projects required approximately 30 full days of researcher and communication staff commitment, spread over a 7-month period. This time investment resulted in a semi-professional end-product accomplished at a fraction of the cost of a professional film production (estimated at 10,000€). The resulting archive of images remains accessible and useful for generating still images used in publications and can be used for follow-up video, website or TV productions.

Link to introductory video (“Flatfish discard survival”)

<http://www.ilvo.vlaanderen.be/EN/Press-and-Media/Video/Flatfish-discard-survival#.V3uoevmLRmM>

Link to methodology video (“Survival of Discarded Flatfish: Methodology”)

<http://www.ilvo.vlaanderen.be/EN/Press-and-Media/Video/Survival-of-discarded-flatfish-Methodology#.V3uorvmLRmM>

Reference

Uhlmann, S. S., Theunynck, R., Ampe, B., Desender, M., Soetaert, M., and Depestele, J. 2016. Injury, reflex impairment, and survival of beam-trawled flatfish. *ICES Journal of Marine Science: Journal du Conseil*, 73 : 1244–1254.